

OSHA'S HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD

Plant owners that have hazardous chemicals or materials in their workplaces are required by OSHA to implement a hazard communication program. The program must include labels on containers of hazardous chemicals, safety data sheets (SDSs) for hazardous chemicals, and training for workers. Each employer must also describe in a written program how it will meet the requirements of the hazard communication program. Some examples of hazardous chemicals or materials include, silica dust, pesticides, chlorine and carbon monoxide. This publication will give a few steps to follow when creating a hazard communication program and the dangers of not fully implementing the program.

CREATING A HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

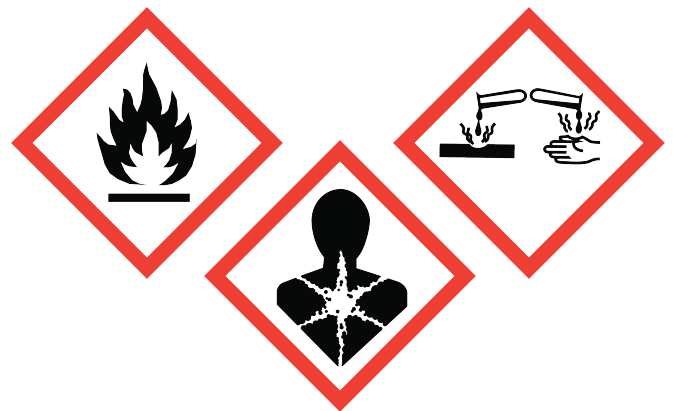
The communication program requires workplaces to provide written information about the identities and hazards associated with chemicals and materials. It must be readily available and understandable to workers.

The key elements of the program include

- Become familiar with OSHA's standard and identify someone that will have primary responsibility of the program.
- Create and maintain safety data sheets (SDS) with up to date information on hazards.
- Properly label containers and use appropriate warning signs.
- Inform and train employees, including the use of proper PPE.
- Implement the program and reassess periodically to make sure of its efficiency.

THE PROGRAMS IMPORTANCE

Establishing & implementing a hazard communication program is meant to improve worker well being through eliminating or reducing hazardous risks. Plant workers use thousands of chemicals every day. Many of these chemicals are suspected to be harmful, but only a small number are regulated. Each year workers suffer more than 190,000 illnesses and 50,000 deaths related to hazardous chemical or material exposure. Chemical and hazardous material exposures have been linked to cancers, lung, kidney, skin, and heart diseases. Along with other health problems depending on the exposure.



The main goal of the hazard communication program is to achieve a safe work environment by ensuring that all hazards in the workplace are clearly communicated and implemented to employers and employees. With the prevalence of hazardous work environments a hazard communication program not only keeps workers safe but also keeps operations running smoothly.

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